

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the opportunity to apply for \$545,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2014 and FY 2015 funds under the Technical Assistance and Workforce Development Program to launch a new Research to Practice (R2P) Initiative. FTA's Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation (TRI) seeks to spur the adoption of results obtained from FTA-funded research projects. R2P will enable TRI to develop a systematic approach to disseminate lessons learned from FTA-funded research projects so that public transportation agencies across the nation are informed and able to implement promising research solutions.

**DATES:** Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV "APPLY" function by 11:59 PM Eastern time on October 12, 2021. Prospective applicants should initiate the process by registering on the GRANTS.GOV website promptly to ensure completion of the application process before the submission deadline. Instructions for applying can be found on FTA's website at <http://transit.dot.gov/howtoapply> and in the "FIND" module of GRANTS.GOV. The funding opportunity ID is FTA-2021-011-TRI-R2P. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tara Clark, Office of Research, Demonstration, and Innovation (TRI), (202) 366-2623, or [tara.clark@dot.gov](mailto:tara.clark@dot.gov).

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**A. Program Description**

Under the Technical Assistance and Workforce Development Program (49 U.S.C. 5314(a)(2)), FTA may enter into cooperative agreements with national non-profit organizations that have demonstrated capacity to provide public transportation-related technical assistance. This program (Federal Assistance Listing 20.531) supports TRI program activities by assessing promising practices for R2P within the public transit industry. The goals of the R2P Initiative are to: (1) identify the highest impact research to practice methods; (2) develop an R2P plan based on these methods; and (3) create an outreach program for FTA's research results.

FTA's mission is to improve public transportation for America's communities. Researching how to do that is critical, as is putting the results into practice. Given the many ways results are shared, FTA is interested in understanding what dissemination and outreach methods have the greatest impact for public transit agencies. Currently, FTA manages an active research portfolio of more than \$200 million dollars for over 200 projects. These programs and projects study industry issues or needs, often leveraging new and emerging technologies and processes to benefit transit agencies and the communities they serve. Research grant recipients typically partner with a public transit agency to study and test solutions. Most research projects generate compelling and useful research reports. However, given the many demands on their time, public transit agency personnel may not have the time to review a full research report. Additionally, although FTA posts new reports on its website, sends out GovDelivery notices when new reports

are available, and otherwise disseminates reports, it is often difficult for transit personnel to effectively use that information. To address these issues, this project will help FTA understand what R2P methods work best for public transportation professionals and develop an R2P plan to implement those methods. This R2P Initiative will help FTA fulfill its research mission by accelerating innovation in public transportation that is safe, meets racial and economic inclusion goals, and is resilient against climate change. This R2P Initiative will help FTA share proven solutions and extrapolate the results so that any transit provider may benefit from the findings.

The primary tasks for this project are as follows:

- Literature Review/Scan of Public Transit Agencies: Perform a scan of R2P methods currently being used by the transit industry that incorporate research innovations into transit systems;
- Literature Review/Scan of Other Industries: Perform the same scan of industries unrelated to public transportation and evaluate their adoptability and effectiveness in public transportation;
- Write a Report: Document, in a report, recommendations for FTA's R2P Initiative;
- R2P Tracking: Develop a method to assess the level of adoption of FTA research solutions for specific innovative technologies;
- Implementation Plan: Develop an implementation plan for the suggested R2P activities;
- Implement one or more R2P Processes: Implement one or more high impact R2P activities identified in the plan (if funding is available).

FTA seeks an organization with experience in R2P methods that can accomplish the primary tasks, and recommend any complementary activities that might be needed to meet the goals of this Initiative. Subject matter experts within FTA will work with the selected organization to transfer knowledge on current and previous research and assist in the identification of the most appropriate R2P methods to further public transit agencies' ability to use and adopt research results. This Initiative supports President Biden's efforts in innovation by implementing R2P processes that help mobilize American ingenuity to build modern infrastructure and an equitable, clean energy future. In addition, this Initiative will advance the goals of the President's January 27, 2021, Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, and has the potential to enhance environmental stewardship and community partnerships, in support of Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5314) authorizes Technical Assistance and Standards funds to be awarded for this cooperative agreement in FY 2021.

FTA will competitively fund one cooperative agreement for a period of up to two (2) years, subject to the availability of funds, with up to \$545,000 available for first-year activities. Any subsequent funding will depend upon: (1) future appropriations; (2) decisions and program priorities established by the Secretary of Transportation related to the implementation of provisions set forth in 49 U.S.C. 5314; and (3) annual performance reviews.

## **C. Eligibility Information**

### *1. Eligible Applicants*

Eligible applicants are non-profit organizations with experience in R2P, marketing, and communications that have the capacity to accomplish the goals and tasks described in the program description. To be considered eligible, applicants must demonstrate the requisite legal, financial, and technical capability to receive and administer Federal funds under this program.

## *2. Cost Sharing or Matching*

The maximum Federal share under the R2P Initiative is 80 percent. The applicant must provide a non-Federal share of at least 20 percent of the net project cost (not 20 percent of the requested grant amount) and must document the source of the local match in the grant application.

Eligible sources of non-Federal match include the following: cash from non-Government sources other than revenues from providing public transportation services; revenues derived from the sale of advertising and concessions; amounts received under a service agreement with a State or local social service agency or private social service organization; revenues generated from value capture financing mechanisms; funds from an undistributed cash surplus; replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve; or new capital. In addition, transportation development credits or documentation of in-kind match may substitute for cash match if identified in the application.

## *3. Eligible Projects*

There is no pre-award authority for this project. Funds are available only for projects that have not already incurred costs prior to the announcement of the successful application.

## **D. Application and Submission Information**

### *1. Address to Request Application Package*

Applications must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV using the standard form (SF) 424 Application for Federal Assistance, which can be downloaded from Grants.gov.

## *2. Content and Form of Application Submission*

### *a. Proposal Submission*

General information for submitting applications along with specific instructions for the forms and attachments required for submission can be found at GRANTS.GOV. A complete proposal submission will consist of at least two files: (1) The SF-424 Mandatory form (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV), and (2) a narrative application document in Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat, or a compatible file format. The narrative application should be in the format outlined in the “Proposal Content” section. A proposal submission may contain additional supporting documentation as attachments. Once completed, the narrative application and any supporting documents must be placed in the “Attachments” section of the SF-424. Applicants must attach the narrative application file to their submission in GRANTS.GOV to successfully complete the proposal process. The application must include responses to all sections of the SF-424, unless indicated as optional. The information in the narrative application will be used to determine applicant and project eligibility for the program, and to evaluate the proposal against the selection criteria described in part E of this notice.

Failure to submit the information as requested can delay review or disqualify the application.

### *b. Application Content*

Proposals must be submitted in a Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat, or compatible file format, double-spaced using Times New Roman, 12-point font. The proposal must contain the following components and adhere to the specified maximum lengths:

- (1) Cover sheet (one page): The cover sheet must include: The name of the entity submitting the proposal; the principal’s name, title, and contact information (e.g.,

address, phone, and email); and the name and contact information for the key point of contact for all proposed activities (if different from principal).

- (2) Executive Summary (not to exceed four pages): The summary must include the following sections: Background, purpose, methodology, intended outputs, outcomes, impacts, and plan for accomplishing the goals and tasks of this initiative.
- (3) Detailed budget proposal and budget narrative (not to exceed three pages).
- (4) Project narrative (not to exceed fifteen pages): The project narrative must include the following information:
  - i. The methodology for addressing the goals and accomplishing the tasks.
  - ii. Tasks, activities, deliverables, milestones, timeline and intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts for achieving the goals outlined in the scope for the first year;
  - iii. Best practices for continued application of the R2P methods recommended by this initiative;
  - iv. The existing and future capacity of the organization to address the issues outlined in the proposal and the organization's ability to implement goals and objectives;
  - v. A detailed plan for communication, technical assistance, and outreach at the State and local levels;
  - vi. A plan to work with stakeholders, institutions of higher education, and other FTA Technical Assistance Centers and to build partnerships at the national level; and
  - vii. Staff qualifications, including: (1) Prior experience providing technical assistance, (2) prior experience implementing the other tasks outlined in this solicitation, (3) organization and staff experience in R2P methods and activities, (4) staff members' knowledge of issues related to public transportation research, and (5) a one-page

biographical sketch for each staff member proposed to take a principal role or perform significant work on the cooperative agreement .

- viii. Supplemental materials, such as letters of support, can be included in an appendices section that is beyond the page limit above but is not to exceed fifteen additional pages.

### *3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*

Each applicant is required to: (1) be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FTA. FTA may not make an award until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FTA is ready to make an award, FTA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. These requirements do not apply if the applicant has an exemption approved by FTA or the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under 2 CFR 25.110(c) or (d).

Registration in SAM may take as little as 3-5 business days, but because there could be unexpected steps or delays (for example, if there is a need to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)), FTA recommends allowing ample time, up to several weeks, for completion of all steps. For additional information on obtaining a unique entity identifier, please visit [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### *4. Submission Dates and Timeframes*

Project proposals must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 PM Eastern time on October 12, 2021. Mail, fax, and email submissions will not be accepted.

FTA urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the due date to allow time to correct any problems that may have caused either GRANTS.GOV or FTA systems to reject the submission. GRANTS.GOV attaches a time stamp to each application at the time of submission. Proposals submitted after the deadline will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances not under the applicant's control. GRANTS.GOV scheduled maintenance and outage times are announced in advance on the GRANTS.GOV website. Deadlines will not be extended due to scheduled website maintenance.

Within 48 hours after submitting an electronic application, the applicant should receive an email message from GRANTS.GOV with confirmation of successful transmission to GRANTS.GOV. If a notice of failed validation or incomplete materials is received, the applicant must address the reason for the failed validation, as described in the email notice, and resubmit before the submission deadline. If making a resubmission for any reason, include all original attachments regardless of which attachments were updated and check the box on the supplemental form indicating this is a resubmission.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the GRANTS.GOV site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered applicants may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) registration in SAM is renewed annually, and (2) persons making submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in GRANTS.GOV by the AOR to make submissions.

## *5. Funding Restrictions*

The primary tasks referenced at Section A, Program Description, are allowable activities in this cooperative agreement, as are complementary activities necessary to meet the goals of this initiative. Allowable direct and indirect expenses must be consistent with the Governmentwide Uniform Administrative Requirements and Cost Principles (2 CFR part 200) and FTA Circular 5010.1E. Funds awarded under this notice cannot be used to reimburse applicants for expenses incurred prior to FTA award of a grant agreement. There is no pre-award authority for this project.

### **E. Application Review Information**

#### *1. Criteria*

FTA will evaluate each proposal based on the proposal's: (1) ability to meet the goals of the R2P Initiative; (2) qualifications of key personnel, experience, and knowledge; (3) communication and outreach strategy; (4) ability to leverage existing FTA Technical Assistance (TA) Centers; (5) coordination with higher education; and (6) management approach. The criteria will be weighed equally. The criteria are detailed below:

1. **Ability to Meet the Goals of the R2P Initiative:** Proposals will be evaluated based on planned activities that will assist in applying FTA's funded research on emerging transit technologies and innovation to the entire industry. FTA is seeking innovative and effective approaches and strategies to accomplish the project tasks.
2. **Qualifications of Key Personnel, Experience and Knowledge:** The proposal should demonstrate that key personnel have the appropriate skills and experience

to carry out the activities. FTA will evaluate the qualifications and experience of the key staff detailed in the proposal for their:

- a. Prior experience working on grants related to new transit technology and innovation, such as FTA grants;
  - b. Prior experience implementing the other tasks outlined in this solicitation; and
  - c. Knowledge of matters related to transit technology, innovation, and institutional issues.
3. Communication and Outreach Strategy: The proposal should demonstrate a plan to work with FTA to build a communications and outreach strategy for FTA to carry out outreach, dissemination, and information management activities. These activities will include capturing and sharing useful best practices in transit technology and innovation. The proposal should include approaches such as the use of social media and other information-sharing technologies to accomplish this strategy.
4. Leveraging existing FTA Technical Assistance (TA) Centers: The proposal must include an overview of FTA's relevant TA Centers and propose how best to use these resources to accomplish the R2P Initiative. This will ensure funds are used in the most efficient way possible. FTA's TA centers include the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC), National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), the National Rural Transportation Assistance Program (NRTAP), and the National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT). A full list of FTA's TA Centers is located on the FTA website:

<http://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/fta-sponsored-technical-assistance-centers>.

5. Coordination with Higher Education: The proposal must include strategies on how best to engage with institutions of higher learning, including University Transportation Centers (UTCs) and universities with transportation programs.
6. Management Approach: The proposal must include an effective management plan to develop and deliver the R2P Initiative and must demonstrate that the applicant has the technical capacity to carry out the plan. FTA will evaluate the applicant's:
  - a. Technical capacity to administer and manage the services proposed;
  - b. Total budget and staffing;
  - c. Evidence of understanding of the R2P Initiative's mission and comprehensive technical approach to delivering the R2P Initiative; and,
  - d. A plan for coordinating with FTA.

## *2. Review and Selection Process*

An FTA technical evaluation committee will evaluate proposals based on the published evaluation criteria. Members of the technical evaluation committee may request additional information from applicants, if necessary. Based on the findings of the technical evaluation committee, the FTA Administrator will determine the final selection of an applicant for program funding. In determining the allocation of program funds, FTA may consider the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards, the percentage of the local share provided, and whether the project includes an innovative technology or practice relating to research to practice. Applications that have a higher local financial commitment may be prioritized.

After applying the above criteria, and in support of Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, the FTA Administrator will give priority consideration to applications that are expected to create significant community benefits relating to the environment, including how R2P implementation can assist in the adoption of low or no emission technologies or specific elements to address greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts as subjects of their literature review. Other areas of interest include how R2P can support a Climate Action Plan, whether an equitable development plan has been prepared, and whether tools such as EPA's EJSCREEN have been applied in project planning. The application should describe specific and direct ways the project will mitigate or reduce climate change impacts. The applicant may address how R2P can assist public transportation providers in mitigating or reducing climate change impacts by reducing emissions, promoting energy efficiency, incorporating electrification or low emission or zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase resiliency, or recycling or redeveloping existing infrastructure.

FTA also will give priority consideration to applications that discuss how R2P can encourage racial equity in two areas: (1) planning and policies related to racial equity and overcoming barriers to opportunity; and (2) project investments that either proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunity, including automobile dependence as a form of barrier, or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity. This objective has the potential to enhance environmental stewardship and community partnerships, and supports Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

Prior to making an award, FTA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Award Performance and Integrity Information System

accessible through SAM. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. FTA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200.206).

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### *1. Federal Award Notices*

FTA will notify the successful applicant and may announce the selection on its website, <https://www.transit.dot.gov>. Following notification, the successful applicant will be required to submit its application through the FTA Transit Award Management System (TrAMS).

### *2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

#### *a. Grant Requirements*

The successful applicant will apply for a cooperative agreement through TrAMS and adhere to the customary FTA grant requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5314, Technical Assistance and Workforce Development, including those of FTA Circular "Research, Technical Assistance, and Training Programs" (FTA C 6100.1E), where applicable. FTA will award and manage a cooperative agreement through TrAMS. Discretionary grants and cooperative agreements greater than \$500,000 will go through the Congressional notification and release process. Assistance regarding these requirements is available from FTA.

#### *b. Standard Assurances*

The applicant assures that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, directives, FTA circulars, and other Federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA cooperative agreement. The applicant acknowledges that it is under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement issued for its project with FTA. The applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies, and administrative practices might be modified from time to time and may affect the implementation of the project. The applicant agrees that the most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise. The applicant must submit the Certifications and Assurances before receiving a grant if it does not have current certifications on file.

### *3. Reporting*

Post-award reporting requirements include submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone Progress Reports in TrAMS on a quarterly basis. Documentation is required for payment. Additional reporting may be required specific to the R2P Program and the recipient may be expected to participate in events or peer networks related to the goals and objectives of the program. The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires data entry at the FFATA Sub Award Reporting System (<http://www.FSRS.gov>) for all sub-awards and sub-contracts issued for \$30,000 or more, as well as addressing executive compensation for both grant recipients and sub-award organizations.

Additionally, it is required that FTA report on the value of Technical Assistance and Standards (49 U.S.C. 5314) investments every year to Congress. Applicants will be required to provide details indicating the need, problem, or opportunity addressed by activities of the

program. The national significance and relevance to the public transportation industry must also be clearly detailed.

As part of completing the annual certifications and assurances required of FTA grant recipients, a successful applicant must report on the suspension or debarment status of itself and its principals.

If the award recipient's active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award made pursuant to this Notice, the recipient must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in connection with the award or performance of a grant, cooperative agreement, or procurement contract from the Federal Government. See Appendix XII to 2 CFR part 200 for more information.

#### **G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts**

For further information concerning this notice, please contact the R2P Program manager, Tara Clark, by phone at 202-366-2623, or by e-mail at [tara.clark@dot.gov](mailto:tara.clark@dot.gov). A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 800-877-8339.

#### **H. Other Information**

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."